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ARIZONA SCHOOLS CHIEF TOM HORNE ANNOUNCES FINAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER (ELL) COSTS TO STATE - $40 MILLION - NOT $300 MILLION PREVIOUSLY CLAIMED BY DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

PHOENIX (Monday, March 3, 2008) -- Today Arizona Schools Chief Tom Horne announced to the State Legislature the total costs from budget requests submitted by 249 districts and charters as revised by the ADE is $40,000,000 million dollars. The requests are for incremental (additional) costs needed to educate Arizona's ELL students.

Back in early February, district superintendents projected that the costs of educating the State's ELL students statewide would be in excess of $300 million dollars.

The first round of SEI budget applications to the Department from districts and charters totaled over $273,000,000 million. After the Department's review for accuracy and compliance, that figure becomes $40,296,750.49.

Some examples of budget requests from the districts and charters that were NOT approved: seventeen districts with no ELL students applied for additional funding; another district requested funding for 90 additional teachers, without explanation, and after ADE review the district only needed 13 additional teachers; another district applied for 66 teachers, without explanation, and only needed 17; another district applied for 49 additional teachers, without explanation, and only needed 1; and another district applied for 11 additional teachers, without explanation, and needed 0.

Horne added: "Some districts applied for textbooks. Textbook funding is provided to all districts for all students and should not be considered an incremental cost for educating ELL students."

Some other examples of budget requests from the districts included: secretaries; administrators; summer camp staff; a janitor; and even a karaoke machine.

Currently, Arizona's reported ELL statewide count is 130,781.

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